

WHAT'S *New*

in the Metropolitan Police Department



*A weekly update for residents, visitors,
and workers in the District of Columbia*

Friday, April 18, 2003

USE OF FORCE BY MPDC OFFICERS DECLINES IN 2002

The number of instances in which MPDC officers discharged their firearms decreased by nearly 22 percent in 2002, continuing an overall trend of reductions in police use of force since the late 1990s. According to new data from the Department's Force Investigation Team (FIT), the total number of firearm discharges by MPDC officers declined to 40 in 2002, from 51 in 2001 and 91 in 1997. Here are some of the key findings from the FIT 2002 Annual Report, which was released this past week:

- There were 24 firearm discharges at people in 2002, down from 29 in 2001 and 34 in 1999.
- In 2002, MPDC officers shot 12 people; five were killed and seven were injured. In 2001, three people were killed and 14 were injured in officer-involved shootings. Over the past five years, officer-involved shootings resulting in injury or death are down 62.5 percent.
- Firearm discharges at animals (dogs) declined from 21 in 1999, to 16 in 2001 and 10 in 2002.
- Accidental discharges by MPD officers increased slightly, from five in 2001 to six in 2002, two of which resulted in injury.
- The number of rounds fired per shooting incident fell slightly, from 3.6 in 2001, to 3.4 in 2002. In 1999, the average was 4.4 rounds per incident.

- ① Read the news release at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/news.asp?sid=2040>
- ① The complete FIT 2002 Annual Report is available, in PDF, at:
http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/pubs/pdf/fit_ar_02.pdf
- ① Learn more about the MPDC's Civil Rights and Force Investigations Division by clicking on:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/serv/citizencomplaints/crfid.shtml>

CHIEF RAMSEY ISSUES STATEMENT ON STATUS OF HIS CONTRACT

Amid media speculation on possible successors to retiring Chicago Police Superintendent Terry Hillard, Chief Ramsey on Friday issued a statement reaffirming his commitment to the District of Columbia and his desire to remain as chief of the MPDC. Following are excerpts from the statement: "As I have said repeatedly, I am honored to serve the people of the District of Columbia by leading the Metropolitan Police Department, and I am proud to work for someone as innovative and supportive as Mayor Williams. Working together, we have accomplished a lot in the area of public safety over the past four years. But there is still much work to be done, and I look forward to being a part of our continuing reform efforts in the years ahead." The Chief added, "This city and its people mean a great deal to me personally, as well as to my family. We have made the District of Columbia our home. By the same token, the members of the Metropolitan Police Department mean a great deal to me. I am honored to lead and to serve alongside so many dedicated men and women, especially during a period of tremendous challenge and remarkable progress for our Department. The MPDC is a very good police department that is on the verge of becoming a great police department—and I want to continue to be a part of that transformation." The statement concludes, "I am hopeful that my contract renewal with the District can be completed very soon. And I look forward to continue working alongside the Mayor, the members of the Metropolitan Police Department and the DC community, as we come together to make our city even safer and more livable."

- ① Read the Chief's complete statement at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/news.asp?sid=2042>

COUNCIL COMMITTEE VOTES TO REDUCE POLICE BUDGET

The DC Council's Committee on the Judiciary voted this week to cut the number of police officers in Mayor Williams's proposed budget for fiscal year 2004, which begins October 1, 2003. The Mayor has proposed an 18 percent increase in the MPDC's operating budget, to \$379 million. The Mayor's proposed budget will allow the MPDC to grow to 3,800 police officers by the end of FY04, up from the present total of about 3,615. The Mayor's budget also includes sufficient funds to cover pay increases recently negotiated with MPDC's unions, as well as realistic overtime costs. In recent years, the MPDC has received funds for hiring new officers, but has been underfunded in salary and overtime for existing personnel. This has forced the Department to use funds intended for hiring to cover the ongoing personnel costs of its current employees. The Mayor's proposed budget would provide for the hiring of new officers up to 3,800, while also meeting commitments to current employees. The Committee recommended transferring millions of dollars out of the proposed budget for hiring new police officers to instead provide for across-the-board pay increases for government employees. The reduction to the proposed MPDC budget was offered by Committee Chair Kathy Patterson (Ward 3); her proposal received the support of Councilmembers Jack Evans (Ward 2) and Kevin Chavous (Ward 7). The complete Council will take up the FY04 budget later this month.

- ① Following the Committee's actions, Mayor Williams issued a statement blasting the recommended cuts in the police budget. Read the Mayor's statement at:
<http://dc.gov/mayor/news/release.asp?id=483>

MARCH PHOTO ENFORCEMENT DATA SHOW CONTINUED REDUCTIONS IN AGGRESSIVE DRIVING

The number of motorists running red lights and speeding aggressively on DC streets continues to be lower as a result of the District's photo enforcement programs. Data for March 2003 show that the percentage of motorists aggressively speeding on roadways monitored by photo radar remains at the lowest number since the program began in July 2001. That month, nearly 31 percent of motorists were exceeding the speeding threshold established for the program. In March 2003, the percentage of aggressive speeders had declined to just over 7 percent. Average speeds of all vehicles traveling on different types of DC roadways monitored by photo radar—including residential streets, arteries and highways—are lower today than when the program started. Similarly, DC's red-light camera program continues to achieve its goal of changing aggressive driving behavior and getting more motorists to stop at red lights. Since its inception in August 1999, the red-light camera program has produced a 68 percent reduction in red-light running violations at the 39 DC intersections equipped with cameras. That is the equivalent of nearly 26,000 fewer red-light running incidents at these camera-equipped intersections.

- ① For more information on DC's automated traffic enforcement programs, including the locations of the red-light cameras and the photo radar enforcement zones, visit the MPDC Traffic Safety page:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/traffic.shtml>

NEWS & NOTES

Drug Free Zones. Beginning next Thursday through Monday, Chief Ramsey will declare two more "drug free zones" in DC neighborhoods, for the purpose of enforcing the District's "Anti-Loitering/Drug Free Zone" law. One of the zones will be in PSA 102, in the area of North Capitol and M Streets, NW; the other zone will be in PSA 707, in the area of Valley Avenue and 13th Street, SE. Learn more about the law at: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/comm/drugfreezone.shtml>

Emergency Road Patrols. The District Department of Transportation this week launched its Roadway Operations Patrol (ROP), a new motorist assistance operation designed to minimize tie-ups from roadway crashes and other incidents. ROP manages roadside incidents in coordination with the MPDC, the District's Fire/EMS Department and counterpart agencies from Virginia and Maryland. ROP supplies quick, free, on-the-spot help to stranded motorists on major bridges and highways, as well as assistance at major and minor crashes and deals with disabled vehicles, hazmat spills, roadside debris and abandoned vehicles. Details at <http://www.mpdc.org/blue/news.asp?sid=2041>

DATA BOX

Homicides (as of 4/18/03)

- 2003: 77
- 2002: 62
- % Change: +24.2%

Arrests (week ending 4/12/03)

- Total: 601
- Drugs: 59
- Prostitution/Sex Offenses: 29

Firearm Recoveries (as of 4/16/03)

- Total: 578
- April: 102

Traffic Fatalities (as of 4/11/03)

- 2003: 11
- 2002: 20
- % Change: -45%

Information, ideas, or comments about this service? Send an e-mail to **KEVIN MORISON**, MPDC's Director of Corporate Communications, at kevin.morison@dc.gov. Would you like to have this information e-mailed to you? Just go to our Website and register with **Crimereports.com**.

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